

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

West Basin Well Water Storage Tank Installation Project

Project No 73-7165

E.A. No. OR-056-00-084

Prineville District

Bureau of Land Management

I. Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to improve the efficiency of water storage and delivery to livestock grazing on public lands in the area.

The “Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington” (“S & G’s”) amended the Brothers/LaPine Resource Management Plan (RMP). The S & G’s cite (on page 17) water development installation as a practice appropriate for promoting the accomplishment of rangeland health goals. There is a need to install a water tank in the Pine Mountain Allotment in order to help meet these goals. Such work would be consistent with the RMP.

Livestock water availability and delivery is essential in keeping livestock grazing management effective and efficient both within the Pine Mountain Allotment and in the adjacent Deschutes National Forest grazing areas. There is a need to continue improving this situation in order to further meet associated management objectives.

II. Proposed Action (Alternative A)

The permittee’s request to install a 10,000 gallon water storage tank within 10 yards of the existing West Basin Well would be approved. In a 30 feet by 30 feet area, wooden timbers would be placed, and the storage tank would be set thereon. A pipe would be run from the well head to the tank. During spring, summer and early fall periods (when livestock were grazing either National Forest or BLM-administered lands), the tank would be filled with well water. A water truck would obtain water from the tank as needed, and used to haul water to various stock troughs in the area.

As part of general area improvement objectives, two additional actions would be taken:

- An old concrete foundation and other materials would be removed from the site, and the site seeded with native vegetation species
- A small wildlife water trough would be set near the large tank, and filled with water during the above mentioned water hauling operations

III. Alternatives to the Proposed Action

One alternative (Alternative B) would involve installation of two additional wells on BLM-administered and National Forest lands in order to bring water closer to livestock.

Another alternative could be to not take any further action at this time (Alternative C). This would lead to continuation of the current practice, which is to fill the water truck directly from the existing well.

IV. Environmental Impacts

Alternative A implementation would not lead to an increase in soil compaction and disturbance of the area, since soil is already well compacted in the road junction/livestock gathering site in which the tank would be located. Alternative B or C implementation would not lead to any changes in this parameter.

Implementation of either Alternative A or B would lead to reduced vehicle presence in the area, which could be of benefit to some wildlife species.

All the alternatives present risks for noxious weed introduction and spread.

Alternative A would be the least costly to implement and be most efficient, since it would preclude the need to drill and build costly new wells, and would provide for faster water truck filling and turn-around times. Improved economics would accrue from reduced livestock operational costs.

Alternatives A or B implementation would reduce risks for livestock losses or grazing management impacts due to increased water source reliability. Management efficiencies would also be realized.

No effects to the following would be expected: Prime or unique agricultural lands; air quality; Areas of Critical Environmental Concern; environmental justice; floodplains; Native American religious concerns; paleontological resources, threatened, endangered or sensitive plants or wildlife; solid or hazardous wastes; Wild and Scenic Rivers; or Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas.

V. Mitigation Measures

Project work would not proceed until such time as necessary clearances were received from District Heritage, Botanical and other specialists. If any heritage resources were discovered during project activities, work would cease immediately and not resume until permission was obtained from District Heritage Specialists.

The water storage tank would be of a color that blends in with the local scenery. No structures (such as handrails) that could be used as avian predator perches would be allowed on the tank. The storage tank would be monitored for avian predator perching. If such perching occurs, then the tank would be modified in a way that precludes such perching.

No installation/removal activities would be permitted to occur between March 15 through October 30.

Vehicles/equipment would be checked for noxious weed plant or seed matter before entering the project area. Disturbed sites would be monitored over time for noxious weed presence; any of these species would be removed from the site upon their discovery.

Any sidecast material would be returned to the original soil surface contour.

VI. Residual Impacts

Neither the Proposed Action nor the stated alternatives would have any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on the environment after application of the above stated mitigation measures.

VII. Coordination and Consultation

A. People and Agencies Consulted

Coordination was performed with the Pine Mountain Allotment grazing permittee and the Deschutes National Forest Range Management Specialist.

B. Preparers

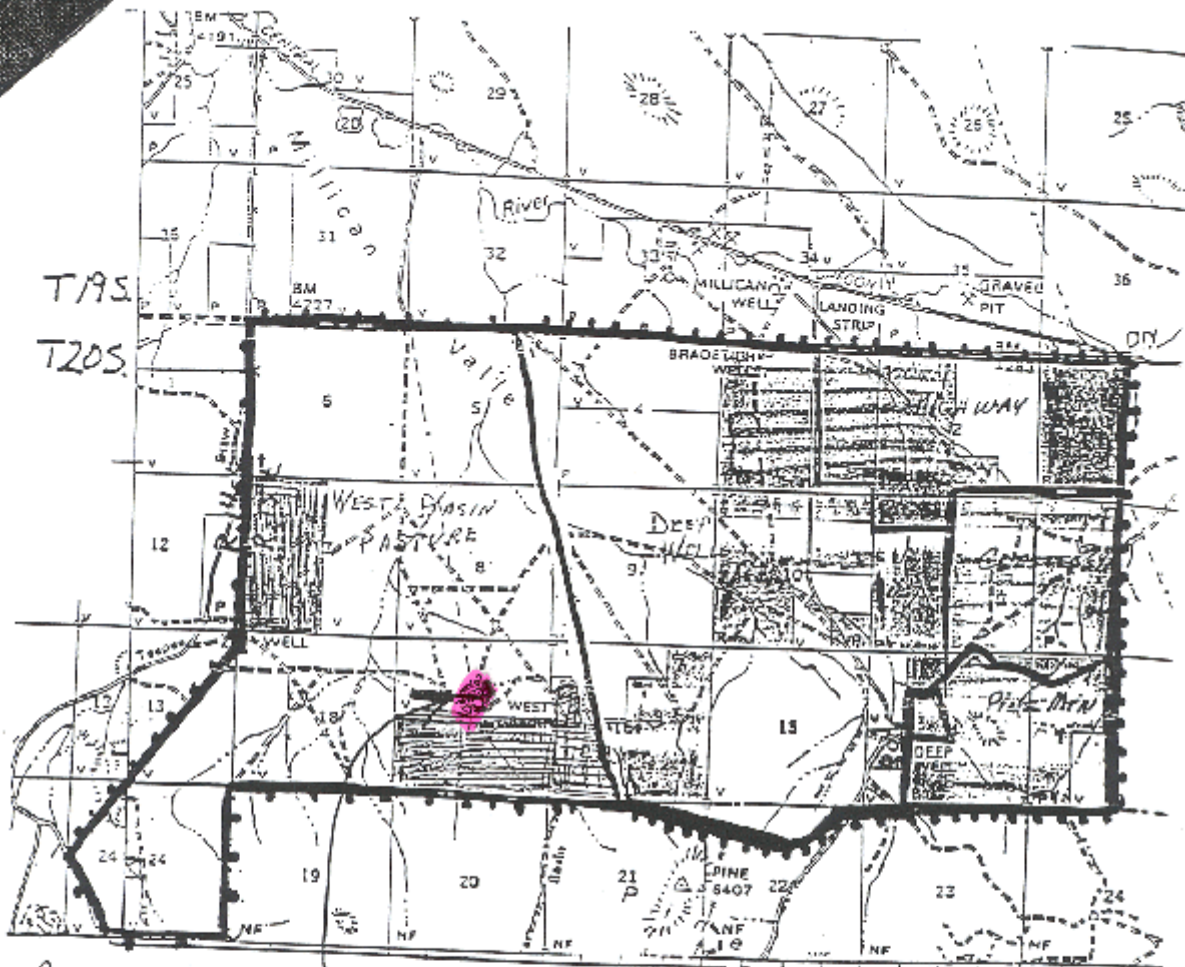
This document was prepared by the Rangeland Management Specialist assigned to this allotment. He consulted with Visuals, Recreation, Wilderness, Soil/Watershed, Archaeology, Wildlife, Plant and Rangeland Management and other specialists employed at the Prineville District of the Bureau of Land Management.

/s/ Danny L. Tippy
Environmental Coordinator

01/08/01
Date

Attachment: Project Map

LOCATION PLAT



Proposed Tank Location RISE

OFFICIAL ALLOTMENT MAP

PINE MOUNTAIN #5211

(ALLOTMENT)

Private Land



UNCONTROLLED

~~State Land~~



Federal (BLM) Land



Allotment Boundary



Philip L. Palmer

(AUTHORIZED OFFICER)

*Acting
Sca Mgr.*

5/24/96

(DATE)